

MICHAEL GIFFIN

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## Turn Off Your Gaydar, Please

A few years ago I was visiting Father Geoff, a retired Catholic priest who was recovering from stroke in rehab. His nephew, a practising Catholic, was visiting him too. As the visit progressed, the nephew began a hypothetical monologue about him, not to him. There are aspects of Father's life he keeps hidden from family, the nephew said rhetorically into the air above Father's head. If only he came out, the nephew opined, he would still be loved and everything would be fine. Father remained stony-faced and silent, refusing to make eye contact.

Although the nephew had good intentions, they seemed neither well thought out nor respectful, making this performance difficult to witness. If Christians want Father's sexual identity, whatever it is, to become a progressive talking point, the propriety of such an attack on sense and sensibility is questionable. What's the difference between pressuring a sick old priest to come out and forcing him to drink the Kool Aid of identity politics? Isn't that the same as forcing him to make an *auto da fé* in the progressive inquisition currently engulfing the West? In assuming Father should be outed, for the public good as well as his own good, the nephew is different in degree but not in kind from Torquemada.

An American man attends the same annual international conference I attend. He used to be an excellent and much-loved parish priest. After years of agonising he asked his bishop to laicise him because he could no longer tolerate the way the Catholic Church treats gays. I'm sorry to hear this, his bishop said, sympathetic but sad at losing a highly-regarded staff member. So the bishop ventured to ask pertinent questions: Why do you want to make an issue of this? Could you not go on as you are, on a don't-ask-don't-tell basis, and be discreet?

Notice the difference between Father Geoff and the American ex-priest. Father Geoff's desire to be left alone seems reasonable. The American ex-

priest wants the Church to make grand gestures about accepting his gay identity. Admittedly, some churches are already doing this. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, is currently under immense pressure from progressives to invite same-sex episcopal spouses to the next Lambeth Conference in 2020. This gesture is a calculated neo-imperial tactic by the Global North to remind the Global South that, in spite of objections from conservatives, Western progressivism is hegemonic and determined to colonise its will.

Thirty years ago, a retired minister from a conservative Protestant denomination began worshipping in our pews. He was investigating the gay Christian thing, and our parish, with its reputation for being inclusive, seemed the logical place to do that. After a few years, he left. I ran into him in Hyde Park one day, near Sydney's War Memorial, and asked where he'd been. He said he'd returned to his conservative denomination because, after years of observing it up close, he thought the gay Christian thing wasn't Christian. He believed the Church welcoming gay people was about inviting them to begin a journey into Christian discipleship. We're supposed to follow Christ's example, he said, Christ isn't supposed to follow our example.

Even listing the range of issues these three stories raise is a difficult task. To the nephew and the American, coming out is obligatory under some old-fashioned Romantic rubric of authenticity. Father Geoff wants to be left alone, which is his choice. The conservative minister grasps the biblical and theological issues involved with coming out and prefers to stay in. If his view isn't politically correct at present, it's cogent and well thought out. Clearly, there are different kinds of gaydar (gay radar). Until recently, gaydar was the ability of gay people to recognise gayness in other gays. Now gaydar has expanded to include anyone's ability to project gayness onto everyone everywhere. In the West, this has become an unhealthy and narcissistic cultural obsession.

Herein lies the dilemma, a reminder of the fault line between two poles. On the one hand, the gay lifestyle is no longer a vice. On the other, it isn't a virtue. There's no teleology, metaphysics or theology of being gay. There's only intersectional identity politics and the human rights industry. There's only what feminism and Cultural Marxism demand.

When your identity is solely attached to the 1960s sexual revolution, your fate is tied to that revolution's future. There's a paradox about this. Gay identity is a totally modern construct. It's a triumph of what sociologists call plastic sexuality. It's replacing traditional relationships based on exchange with what's called the genital life.

A fortnight before the same-sex-marriage postal survey I was walking through Redfern on my way to give communion to the housebound. There was a Yes flyer on the footpath. It told me to vote Yes for two reasons: first, because Tony Abbott wants me to vote No; second, because weddings are events and gays stage fabulous events. As a piece of propaganda, it struck me as superficial, bitchy and mean.

Its argument in favour of same-sex marriage was negative. It appealed to the worst aspects of herd mentality and group-think. It was designed to promote loathing of conservative and religious people as Other. When you hide behind Tony Abbott Derangement Syndrome, you might win your cultural battle, but in showing your true colours you could lose the cultural war. When you bear false witness against the Other, you aren't telling the truth about yourself.

The term *homosexual* was an adjective until psychiatrist Havelock Ellis first used it as a noun around 1897, and he apologised for such clumsy usage. Until then people spoke of homosexual acts, not homosexual persons. It was Freud who defined people in terms of their sexual feelings. This has had the effect of defining as homosexual that which isn't homosexual, an insidious manoeuvre that weaponises identity for ideological purposes.

During the sexual revolution, homosexual men favoured the word *gay* to describe their identity; however, because the word also had pejorative connotations, other terms were encouraged as identity politics evolved. In 1978, the Sydney Mardi Gras began as a pride parade. In the late 1990s, under lesbian management, there were attempts to turn

the pride parade into a cultural festival, like the Sydney Festival, but the idea died after the Howard government wouldn't fund it. At the time many saw this as homophobic conservatism thwarting homophilic progressivism.

Up to this point, I've been describing gays, lesbians and bisexuals who are cisgendered; those whose gender identities correspond with their biological and genetic sex. With the advent of gender dysphoria or transgenderism—men who identify as women, women who identify as men—both cisgendered and transgendered are grouped together under the initialism LGBT+. This grouping conflates the homosexual subset of the cisgendered with the category of transgendered. The conflation

may be politically convenient but it's problematic because the interests of the two groups differ to the point of being antithetical. This makes the grouping illogical if not meaningless.

The initialism has been politicised, marketed and dramatised at the behest of intersectional identity politics. It's a perfect example of how Third Wave Feminism and Cultural Marxism control the zeitgeist that drives our political, academic, media and social policy narratives. Cracks are appearing in transgender ideology, though, as most transgender people are males who identify as females. Their encroachment upon the female world has highlighted many threats, including the threat of

erasing biological femaleness altogether. Citizens who are otherwise laissez-faire are beginning to grasp the irrationality and the dangers of allowing the male-to-female transgendered, with their biological advantages of strength and body mass, to compete in sporting teams of biological females.

Same-sex attraction has always existed among a minority. Fans of Mary Renault's narrative portraits of romanticised pederasty in ancient Greece believe the ancient world was a nirvana for same-sex behaviour until Judeo-Christianity arrived with its moral strictures and became hegemonic. This narrative represents a particularly bad form of revisionist history, plays loose with the truth, and is intellectually indefensible. Nevertheless, the idea has been widely promoted. Behind it lies the  $2 + 2 = 5$  rhetoric that infects most public discourse and private speech. In this realm of fallacious reasoning, it's never enough to simply accept same-sex attraction as part of the dignity of difference. The

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rhetoric always comes in an ideological package, with a cartoon villain, a straw man lurking in the shadows, and a religious person threatening the gay person's elusive pursuit of freedom.

The mantra Love is Love, chanted so effectively before the SSM postal survey, is usually a pre-emptive incitement of loathing against the Other who disagrees. Whenever I ask a gay person to give examples of the homophobic discrimination he claims to exist, he never speaks about the present and only gestures vaguely towards the West's homophobic past. Presumably this is because, at the present time, examples of Western homophobia are rare. In the West, homosexuals have become a powerful and protected minority.

Not long ago I attended an ethics workshop where a feminist woman priest from England said the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 was a biblical example of transgenderism. Now it's absurd to equate the forced castration of a royal slave with a male desire to identify as a female; but never stand between rational thought and someone seeking evidence to support a feminist thesis. To equate the Ethiopian eunuch with transgenderism is a logical fallacy, a false equivalence, a propaganda technique.

Cross-dressers have always existed, as a heterosexual as well as a homosexual minority. If some cultures tolerated cross-dressers more than others, they were never equated with transgenderism until hormone therapy and gender-reassignment surgery became available. During my lifetime, it has become technologically and medically possible for a biological and genetic male to become an imitation of a biological and genetic female. Once this occurred, and was socially tolerated, ideological pressure followed to legislate the imitation as real under the law.

On one level, this kind of human innovation and intervention in the natural world is an artefact of Promethean science, a result of post-truth social constructionism, the idea that reality is socially constructed, and objective truth doesn't exist. On another level,  $2 + 2 \neq 5$ . Insisting that a human-made imitation of a woman is a natural woman, and real under the law, removes humanity further from what was once called nature. By itself, cross-dressing doesn't alter nature's essential characteristics. Interfering with biology, denying its objective reality, legislating the reality of human imitations, is tantamount to saying nature has no organic characteristics and does not have or obey her own laws.

This is humanity at the crossroads. We cannot say there's a difference between gender-reassignment surgery and, say, a vital organ transplant unless our

ethical and moral frameworks distinguish between the two. At best, gender reassignment isn't necessary. At worst, it's a hubristic rebellion against natural law, a crime against nature.

The paradox of the LGBT+ initialism is how the T now dominates and oppresses the L, G and B. To the extent that most transgendered persons are biological males transitioning to imitation females, transgender ideology is having harmful consequences for biological females, heterosexual and homosexual. Transgender ideology is a vehicle to achieve Cultural Marxism's ultimate goal of erasing the categories of biological male and biological female.

Politicians speak of an LGBT+ community, but what do the letters in the initialism have in common? Isn't the initialism just a convenient idea on which to hang political correctness? The same can be said of the rainbow flag, which makes many feel diverse and inclusive, a talisman waved around for its supposedly virtuous powers, but think of those excluded, those whom Cultural Marxists don't want in their utopia of diversity.

Using the full range of colonisation strategies masquerading as human rights, the LGBT+ lobby has been so successful that within a generation the "Love that dares not speak its name" has manoeuvred itself to the centre of Western life. By portraying themselves as victims of traditional morality, as ordinary citizens seeking nothing but the right to belong or the freedom to become, they have redefined traditional morality by isolating it and making it seem outdated, repressive and culturally embarrassing. This is calculated and deliberate, of course, since a large aspect of gay identity is setting trends rather than following them.

The central features of LGBT+ colonisation are the sophisticated marketing of the gay lifestyle including promiscuity, polyamory, drug-fuelled partying and sex with adolescents. The Pill allowed women to have sex like men. The social marketing of gay sex has encouraged women to have sex like gay men. In mainstream entertainment, infidelity is the order of the day. It's no coincidence that the creators of *Sex in the City* and *Desperate Housewives* were gay men. In the US there are openly gay writers on every major prime-time sitcom.

Women who see themselves portrayed in these sitcoms are really watching the self-actualisation of the gay men who write and produce them. It's a giant hoax.

We know about Cultural Marxist indoctrination programs, such as Safe Schools, which aim to normalise the LGBT+ lifestyle among the impressionable young and amount to the improper

sexualisation of children. There's something sinister about teaching gender fluidity to children with the full support of the educational and medical establishments hostage to the LGBT+ lobby. Encouraging children to transition to another gender because it's a progressive trend, giving puberty blockers to minors, should be regarded as forms of malpractice and child abuse. Why are they tolerated?

Science is often invoked as an authority but what kind of science and what kind of authority? Does the fact that scientists *can* do something, now, like blocking puberty, removing healthy genitalia, and administering sex hormones for a transgendered person's entire life, mean they *should* do it? Physicians, surgeons, psychiatrists and psychologists have all become hostages to a fake narrative. The LGBT+ lobby is responsible for the Stockholm syndrome within the scientific and medical establishments and their ethics committees.

There's an ideological takeover of social policy and higher education and with the takeover there's enormous pressure to change what constitutes the "scientific" evidence that informs evidence-based practice. This can be seen in the kinds of articles being submitted to social science journals, as ideologically-driven academics seek to create an evidence base for the intersectional nanny state. For example, there's a significant increase in the number of qualitative studies which attempt to demonstrate that LGBT+ couples make better parents than heterosexual couples.

This highlights the methodological problems of social science research, which usually revolve around the researchers' sampling procedure and unwillingness to describe what their sample represents, how their sample is representative, and how they've confounded for the inevitable biases. In tailoring their findings to fit a predetermined narrative, they end up producing propaganda rather than evidence.

Queer Theory is fashionable in the humanities. Using a Cultural Marxist lens, it challenges all forms of heteronormativity and debunks the status quo. Its goal is to queer the world, a form of neo-imperial colonisation through which gaydar, an overwhelmingly Western phenomenon, refashions the world in its queer image. This is a new and more narcissistic form of Orientalism.

To live in the inner city is to move among large numbers of confident LGBT+ people policing the territory they claim as theirs. The message they project isn't hard to read, through the transparent human-rights bubble that surrounds them, and the vague aura of menace should they perceive a threat to their ideological dominance. The dignity of their difference is therefore as fragile as the totalitarianism of their identity politics. If you sniff the wind, you'll smell Tony Abbott Derangement Syndrome.

The aetiology of derangement syndromes must be openly discussed, whether they are triggered by Tony Abbott, George Pell, Israel Folau or Margaret Court. Each syndrome presents as a pre-emptive incitement of hostility against the Other whose conservatism or religiosity threatens the progressive lobby. A scapegoat is an animal ritually burdened with the sins of Others and driven away. At present, those who practise biblical mores and advocate biblical values have become scapegoats.

In the bygone world of self-mocking gay humour, there was once a saying, "Anyone who says 'Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned' has never met a queen slightly inconvenienced." This kind of humour is no longer encouraged. Along with other forms of antiquated gay speech, the term *queen* is discouraged now, because political correctness prevents gays from

voicing the vernaculars once part of their identity. This suggests their identity is now manipulated by an ideological narrative external to themselves. Many of them are happy with this, since it keeps them in the public spotlight, where they can be seen as trend-setters, innovators of social fashion and instigators of social change.

To overcome the erroneous connotations of the term "postmodernity", the Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman coined the term "liquid modernity" for the world's present condition, to contrast it with the "solid" modernity that preceded it. The transition from solid to liquid modernity has created an unprecedented new setting that confronts individuals with a series of challenges never before encountered. Because social identities and institutions are in constant flux, they no longer have time to solidify, and cease to be frames of reference for the young, who must find other models for their lives.

Westerners born after the sexual revolution have

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been raised on a particular ideological narrative. They've been told they can be whatever they want to be, do whatever they want to do, make up their own values, and assemble their own identities, as they want, from whatever is at hand. Everything is up for grabs, apparently, including whether they are male or female or something in between. Their need for recognition and affirmation now comes from their presence on social media and internet dating sites. Their lives suffer when this doesn't work for them, hence their increased rates of depression and suicide.

When gay identity mainstreamed itself many if not most gays chose just to blend into society. Nevertheless, after two generations of gaydar relentlessly colonising every corner of the West, LGBT+ identity is still challenged by its instability, between cisgendered homosexuals who want to be accepted as cisgendered heterosexuals, and the transgendered who want to be accepted as whatever biological sex they identify with. Neither of these is possible. In the former case, because  $M + M \vee F + F \neq M + F$ . In the latter case, because  $2 + 2 \neq 5$ .

In *Cheap Sex* (2017), Mark Regnerus predicts that, after a brief period of meeting pent-up demand, same-sex marriage will recede: "By 2030, there is a good chance that a look-back at June 2015"—when the US Supreme Court ruled in favour of SSM—"will reveal same-sex marriage as a quest for rights and a cultural land grab rather than a product of the genuine desire to access a historic institution." In Australia the motivation for this recession could be more pragmatic, since two single pensions provide thousands more in benefits than one couple's pension. So, avoiding grand identity gestures can have economic advantages.

When Pope Francis famously made his off-the-cuff "Who am I to judge?" remark to journalists on a plane, there was a frenzy of speculation about the Church finally accepting practising homosexuals. The official policy is different. The official Catholic teaching of celibacy hasn't changed and isn't likely to change. Gays are welcome to train for ordination if they agree to lead a celibate life. Of course that's not fashionable but neither are clerical vocations or Christian discipleship more generally.

When Cardinal Pell famously refused to give communion to a group of gay activists who came to the altar wearing rainbow sashes, he was reminding them that God's altar isn't the place for politi-

cal lobbying or other forms of social activism. If they take their sashes off, and leave them in the pews, they are free to receive communion. That's traditional Christian teaching, not homophobia.

When Prime Minister Scott Morrison famously tweeted, "We do not need 'gender whisperers' in our schools. Let kids be kids," he was of course pilloried by the Left. It was a measured and sensible comment, though, which added to the long list of reasons why he was elected against Labor's promise to promote transgender ideology.

The fatal mistake of transgender ideology, its ultimate over-reach, has been insisting there's no meaningful difference between a female impersonator and a biological female or a male impersonator and a biological male. The embedding of cisgendered homosexuals in mainstream society is another issue entirely, although Regnerus's prediction about quests for rights and cultural land grabs is probably close to the mark.

The Left's playbook after Brexit, Trump and the 2019 Coalition victory in the federal election isn't going to change. If what we can see in the UK and the US is any indication, the Left will double down on climate-change hysteria, identity politics and a steady diet of confected outrage and hate. If this isn't a winning formula it's apparently the only formula. Having played all their cards, and backed themselves into a corner, LGBT+ activists and transgender ideologues have little scope to change. Dog whistling about conservative bigotry, homophobia and transphobia will remain predictable reactions. At least we know what to expect.

In June 2019 the Vatican published *Male and Female He Created Them: Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education*. The new document reinforces traditional Christian teaching about the binary createdness of human sexuality. It argues that human nature is to be understood as the unity of body and soul, in which the horizontal dimension of interpersonal communion is integrated with the vertical dimension of communion with God. This isn't what the Left wants to hear. So, as the culture wars intensify, watch this space.

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*Michael Giffin is a priest in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney. He contributed "Anglicanism's Crisis and Its Joyous Counter-Rebellion" in the April issue.*